

Prayer: Communicating With The Father

Teaching given by Peter Warren at FGPC, January - March 2015

1. What Is Prayer?

- Prayer is asking God (Matthew 7.7-8; Mark 11.24; John 14.13-14)
 - most people associate prayer with asking God to meet needs and situations that we have or find ourselves in.
 - Notice that prayer is asking God, not begging Him. The Bible never tells us to beg, but to ask in Jesus name.
- Prayer is talking to God (Philippians 4.6; 1 Thessalonians 5.17-18)
 - prayer is more than just asking for the things we need. It is talking to God. Not just about the things we need but all things.
 - Prayer is thanking Him for who He is and what He has done for us.
- Prayer is listening to God (John 16.13-15; Revelation 3.13; 1 Samuel 3.10-11; Isaiah 30.21)
 - Many Christians have the concept that they can bring their requests and petitions to God through prayer and then carry on with what they are doing. Prayer is more than just asking or talking to God. Prayer involves listening.
 - How would you feel if you were in a conversation and the only one doing the talking was the other person. Then just as you were about to say something important they said goodbye and left – but too often we treat God like that.
 - Prayer is dialogue not a monologue – we need to allow God to speak to us when we pray.
 - God will speak to us through His word and the Holy Spirit direct into our lives
- Prayer is a foundation for our walk and service before God (Matthew 6.10; Acts 13.2-3; Luke 10.2)
 - Before we do anything for God, prayer must be our foundation. Our decisions , plans and actions are taken in prayer.
 - As we examine the lives of the patriarchs, Bible characters and other men and women of God we see that their lives and ministries were under-girded with prayer – Abraham, Moses, David, Paul - William Carey, Hudson Taylor, Evan Roberts.
 - Jesus Himself often withdrew to pray – He needed to 'hear' from His Father, how much more do we?
 - In this teaching series we are going to look at the prayers of some these patriarchs and men/women found in the Scripture
- Prayer is one of the greatest 'tools' in the Christian's tool box. (Ephesians 6.10-18; Luke 24.40)
 - Prayer is essential in our 'wrestle' against the enemy
 - We should pray that we don't fall into temptation
 - If we are sick and suffering we should pray
 - If we are in trouble – pray!

A. Types of Prayer

- Prayer of Petition
- Prayer of Faith
- Prayer of Intercession
- Prayer of Commitment
- Prayer of Consecration
- Prayer of Supplication

B. Is There A Right Or Wrong Way Of Praying?

“Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume *it* upon your lusts” James 4.3

- We should not pray with wrong motives or out of the will of God
- We should pray in faith, believing that we receive.
- Prayer should never be hurried – anything we do where God is concerned should not be hurried or rushed: church, devotions, worship, reading the word and prayer
- There are some prayers which should never be prayed:
'Lord if it be thy will then heal me of this sickness' – this type of prayer shows our ignorance of the Word. The Word already says that it is God's will for us to be in health – to pray 'if it be thy will' underscores our unbelief
- “For Jesus' sake we pray..” We pray in the name of Jesus not '*for His sake*'. (Ephesians 5.20; Colossians 3.17)

C. Overview:

- What is prayer?
 - Asking
 - Talking
 - Listening to God
- How should we pray?
 - To God the Father, the Son and Holy Spirit
 - In faith
 - In Jesus' name
- Why should we pray?
 - God expects/commands it – Jesus said 'when we pray..' not if
 - It shows God that we trust Him
 - It is essential for the wrestle against the enemy

- Where should we pray?
 - In the secret place / closet (Matthew 6.6)
- When should we pray?
 - At all times – evening, morning and noon (Psalm 55.17; Luke 18.1)
 - Without ceasing (1 Thessalonians 5.17)
 - Whenever there is a need to pray

2. Different Types of Prayer

Ephesians 6.18

“praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints ”

Paul wrote this verse at the end of his teaching on the Christian armoury and was understood to be used as a weapon against the enemy. This verse tells us to pray always with all prayer and supplication in the spirit – I believe this shows us some different aspects about prayer that we ought to take note:

- *praying always..* – our prayers are not relegated to a particular time but we should be unceasing in our praying. Neither does this mean that we spend 24hrs/day in prayer so that we don't actually do any work. This statement means that we should always be in the attitude and spirit of prayer and that we are ready to pray whenever the need arises.
- *with all prayer and supplication* - that is all kinds of prayer (see NIV) - there are different kinds and types of prayer and we pray according to the need or situation.
- *in the Spirit* - these prayers are in the Spirit, not in the flesh. We do not pray to be seen or heard of men. The words '*in the spirit*' can also mean 'with breath' – that means our prayers are to be voiced.
- *all perseverance* - these are deliberate prayers – they are not just vainly repeated words or rituals. We pray diligently and with effort. We likened prayer to a tool and a tool is used deliberately to perform a task.

Different Types of Prayer

- **Prayer of Faith / Prayer of Petition** - James 5.15
 “And the prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven”
 - petitioning God for our requests, problems and needs
 - based on God's word – His revealed will. That means we cannot pray 'if it be thy will' in the prayer of faith
 - No if's in this prayer – when you pray the prayer of faith believe that you receive and act accordingly (faith in action).
 “And whatever things you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive.” Matthew 21.22
 “Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive *them*, and you will have *them*.” Mark 11.24

- all prayer should be in faith, but not all prayer is the 'prayer of faith'
- **Prayer of Supplication** - Philippians 4.6

“Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God”

 - means 'earnest entreaty or request'

“Then He said to His disciples, "The harvest truly *is* plentiful, but the labourers *are* few. Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers into His harvest.” Matthew 9.37-38
 - with fervency and desire, heartfelt and continued

“Confess *your* trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much. Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed earnestly that it would not rain; and it did not rain on the land for three years and six months. And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth produced its fruit.” James 5.16-18

“pray [*also*] for one another, that you may be healed and restored [*to a spiritual tone of mind and heart*]. The earnest (heartfelt, continued) prayer of a righteous man makes tremendous power available [*dynamic in its working*].” (vs16 Amp)
- **Prayer of Intercession** - Ezekiel 22.30-31

“So I sought for a man among them who would make a wall, and stand in the gap before Me on behalf of the land, that I should not destroy it; but I found no one. Therefore I have poured out My indignation on them; I have consumed them with the fire of My wrath; and I have recompensed their deeds on their own heads,” says the Lord GOD”

 - stand in the gap between parties (umpire) - e.g. salvation of a loved one
 - prayer to hold back judgement
 - prayer for God to heal and bless the land - revival

“if My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land.” 2 Chronicles 7.14
 - like supplication, it is earnest and continued
 - Jesus is our Intercessor
- **Prayer of Commitment** – 1 Peter 5.7

“casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.”

 - casting your cares upon the Lord – cast them in prayer
 - roll them onto Jesus

“You can throw the whole weight of your anxieties upon him, for you are his personal concern ” (vs7, JBP)

“Commit your way to the LORD, Trust also in Him, And He shall bring *it* to pass.” Psalm 37.5

“Commit your way to the Lord [*roll and repose each care of your load on Him*]” (Amp)

- do not worry or fret or be anxious about anything, cast all your cares onto Jesus – do it in prayer
 - seek (enquire/ask/pray) first the kingdom of God
 “But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.” Matthew 6.33

- **Prayer of Consecration** - Luke 22.41-42
 “And He was withdrawn from them about a stone's throw, and He knelt down and prayed, saying, "Father, if it is Your will, take this cup away from Me; nevertheless not My will, but Yours, be done.””
 - dedicating our lives to the service of God
 - we can pray 'if it be thy will' – only used by Jesus in his prayer of consecration in the garden of Gethsemane.

- **Prayer of Worship** – Acts 13.1-4
 “..as they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, "Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." Then, having fasted and prayed, and laid hands on them, they sent *them away*” (vs 2-3)
 - waiting on God / ministering to God
 - not asking for anything just talking with God and worshipping
 - “But those who wait on the LORD Shall renew *their* strength; They shall mount up with wings like eagles, They shall run and not be weary, They shall walk and not faint.” (Isaiah 40.31)
 - praise and thanksgiving
 “But at midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them.” Acts 16.25

- **Prayer of Agreement** – Matthew 18.19-20
 “Again I say to you that if two of you agree on earth concerning anything that they ask, it will be done for them by My Father in heaven. ”
 - tremendous power as two or more come together and agree in prayer
 - foundation is God's word
 - pray in Jesus' name
 - unity and harmony
 “Behold, how good and how pleasant *it is* For brethren to dwell together in unity!... For there the LORD commanded the blessing— Life forevermore”
 Psalm 133.1,3
 - forgive – prayer and forgiveness go together, specially in prayer of agreement.
 “And whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive him, that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses. But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father in heaven forgive your trespasses.” Mark 11.25-26
 In Matthew 18, these verses are sandwiched by teaching on forgiveness and dealing with a sinning brother.

There are other kinds of prayer which have not been mentioned above.

- United Prayer – where the church meet together for prayer. Acts 4.23-30

- Prayer in the Spirit – praying in tongues for self edification. Jude 20
- Prayer of Binding & Loosing - enforcing the authority invested in you as a believer. Matthew 18.18

3. The Intercessory Prayer of Abraham

Genesis 18.17-33

A. Prayer of Intercession

- Standing in the gap in prayer
- prayer to hold back judgement and pray for blessing in the land.

Ezekiel 22.29-30

“The people of the land have used oppressions, committed robbery, and mistreated the poor and needy; and they wrongfully oppress the stranger. So I sought for a man among them who would make a wall, and stand in the gap before Me on behalf of the land, that I should not destroy it; but I found no one”

Abraham stands in the gap for the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah

B. Abraham Prays According To The Purpose Of God

- God revealed to him His purpose for Sodom and Gomorrah (v17)

“Surely the Lord God does nothing, unless He reveals His secret to His servants the prophets” Amos 3.7

- When we pray we should always pray according to His counsel and will – His Word

“Put Me in remembrance; let us contend together; state your case, that you may be acquitted” Isaiah 43.26

- Abraham prays for His own and also for those who treated him badly. (v24)
 - Abraham’s concern was for every man – His nephew Lot and even the wicked men of the cities

“But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you” Matthew 5.44

C. Boldness

- He approaches God and asks His request with boldness (v22-25)
- He knows the nature and character of God – He believes that justice will be done

vs25 – “*Far be it from You to do such a thing as this*”

- Abraham knew the covenant he had with God
- We have boldness and access through Jesus (Ephesians 3.11-12)
 “according to the eternal purpose which He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord, in whom we have boldness and access with confidence through faith in Him”

D. Fervency

“The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much” James 5.16

- The word fervent in this verse means: to be active, powerful and efficient in operation to cause change

Another definition of fervent is ‘to strive, to be hot, to boil, zeal’ – one of the Greek words translated as fervent also gives us our word ‘to agonise’

- Abraham was so passionate for these people. He was blessed to be a blessing - He had a promise from God that all families of the earth would be blessed in him. (Genesis 12.3)
- He prayed fervently for the people of these cities, he agonised over them, he recognised that his action (intercession) had power to change things.

E. Persistence

- Abraham did not give in interceding for Sodom & Gomorrah. He persisted right through until he had assurance from God that if ten righteous people could be found that the cities would not be destroyed
- Jesus taught us that we should be importunate (persist and persevere, having the audacity and boldness to ask) in our praying until we have the assurance that the prayer is answered.
- Intercession is about being persistent until we get the assurance that our prayers have been answered (Luke 11.5-13; Luke 18.1-5)

“I say to you, though he will not rise and give to him because he is his friend, yet because of his persistence he will rise and give him as many as he needs” Luke 11.8

“yet because this widow troubles me I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me” Luke 18.5

F. God's Nature Extends Beyond What We Ask

- Abraham got the assurance that the cities would not be destroyed if ten righteous were found – but not even five were found.
- God is a God who goes beyond our expectations – even though ten righteous could not be found, He still spared Lot and his family

“[God] ..is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think” Ephesians 3.20

- God knows what we need before we ask Him, but when we ask Him in faith He gives us more than just what we ask.
- Solomon asked for wisdom to judge God's people right – God gave him what he asked and added to it - riches, wealth honour. (2 Chronicles 1.7-12)

“On that night God appeared to Solomon, and said to him, "Ask! What shall I give you?"

... "Now give me wisdom and knowledge, that I may go out and come in before this people; for who can judge this great people of Yours?"

Then God said to Solomon: "Because this was in your heart, and you have not asked riches or wealth or honour or the life of your enemies, nor have you asked long life—but have asked wisdom and knowledge for yourself, that you may judge

My people over whom I have made you king — wisdom and knowledge are granted to you; and I will give you riches and wealth and honour, such as none of the kings have had who were before you, nor shall any after you have the like." ”

(vs 7, 10-12)

4. Lessons From The Prayer Of Moses

Exodus 17.8-16

Although this is an account of a battle that took place against the Amalekites and not actually a prayer itself, it is most commonly agreed that the actions of Moses are symbolic and contain much teaching on prayer.

Let us first look at the typology of this account and then afterwards the lessons we can learn.

A. Typology

- Moses **outstretched arms** – symbolic of prayer

“I desire therefore that the men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting” 1 Timothy 2.8

The lifting up of hands was always a sign of prayer. The ancients believed that it was forbidden for a man to lift up his hands above, except in prayer, and supplications, and in blessings to his Lord.

“But Abram said to the king of Sodom, ‘I have raised my hand to the Lord, God Most High, the Possessor of heaven and earth’” Genesis 14.22

“When you spread out your hands, I will hide My eyes from you; Even though you make many prayers, I will not hear. Your hands are full of blood” Isaiah 1.15

“Who may ascend into the hill of the Lord? Or who may stand in His holy place? He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who has not lifted up his soul to an idol, nor sworn deceitfully” Psalm 24.3-4

see also: Psalm 68.31; Exodus 9.29,33; 1 Kings 8.22; 2 Chronicles 6.12-13

- **Amalekites** – symbolic of the enemy who comes out against us

- The Amalekites were from the family of Esau - Esau hated his brother Jacob because of the birthright and blessing.
- This enmity ran from generation to generation
- The devil comes out against us because of his enmity with God – he cannot touch God so he comes after us

“Be sober [self controlled], be vigilant [watchful]; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour” 1 Peter 5.8

- **Rod** in Moses hand – symbolic of the power and presence of God
 - Summoned the plagues in Egypt – Exodus 7.9-12, 19-20; Exodus 8.5-6, 16-17; Exodus 9.23; Exodus 10.13
 - Parting of the red sea – Exodus 14.16
 - Water from the rock – Numbers 20.11

The raised rod would encourage those in the battle to know that God was with them, fighting for them – they would see the rod from the valley and fight on.

It is important for us to remember past victories and answers to prayer as an encouragement for our faith

Isaiah (11.1) prophesied that a Rod would come out of Jesse – this Rod would utterly defeat the enemy and bring victory for all of the children of God. Of course this speaking of Jesus and He did that through His death on the cross.

Jesus was the raised Rod –

- raised on the cross,
- brought our victory through His blood -
- we have peace with God through Jesus – God is with us
 - “And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all *peoples* to Myself.” This He said, signifying by what death He would die” John 12.32-33

B. Lessons from Moses

- Prayer for front-line workers
 - Moses prayed while Joshua fought in the battle against the enemy
- Encouragement
 - The raised rod encouraged those in battle – the symbol of past victories and blessings, and the presence of God
- Effective fervent praying
 - While ever Moses hands were raised they were winning the battle
 - When Moses let down his hands the enemy began to win.
 - This shows us the importance of persisting and persevering in prayer.
- Others help provide prayer support
 - Aaron and Hur supported the arms of Moses when they became heavy – the more people that pray help keep the hands raised.

- Steadiness of hands - Steadfast in faith

God revealed Himself to Moses through one of His covenant names:

Jehovah Nissi – The Lord Is My Banner (Exodus 17.15)

The rod raised was symbolic of an army banner under which the army fought. While the banner was raised the armies fought.

- This is a military reference – the raised standard was the signal to go into battle. It was carried by a cavalry soldier. A lowered standard would signal surrender or end of battle.
- Prayer is the Lord's banner under which we wage warfare in the heavenly places (Ephesians 6.12, 18). We use the weapons of our warfare under the banner of all prayer and supplication in the Spirit

You may have seen the tourists following the raised banner of the party leader

The Lord is My Banner – His presence, His protection and help

- The Lord is My Miracle – an alternative definition of Jehovah Nissi according to *'John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible'*

5. The Consecration Prayer Of Solomon

1 Kings 8.22-53

2 Chronicles 6.14-42

Before Solomon prayed this prayer he had brought up the ark of the covenant of the Lord and placed it in the inner sanctuary of the Temple. As the priests came out of the Most Holy Place the cloud, the glory of God, filled the house (10-11) so that the priests could not continue ministering.

- He stands before the altar in the presence of all the congregation – this is a public prayer. All the congregation hears what he prays, they are all a part of this prayer, they had all witnessed the placing of the ark of God, they set themselves in agreement.
- He spreads out his hands toward heaven – we read in 2 Chronicles that he kneels down on a bronze platform (2 Chronicles 6.13) and spreads out his hands. **“(for Solomon had made a bronze platform five cubits long, five cubits wide, and three cubits high, and had set it in the midst of the court; and he stood on it, knelt down on his knees before all the assembly of Israel, and spread out his hands toward heaven)”**
 - Solomon adopts a kneeling posture
 - this is a mark of surrender. In the prayer of consecration we surrender our will to the will of God.
 - this is also a mark of reverence and honour – we kneel in worship. Kneeling before the Lord is instructed in Psalm 95.6.
 - Jesus knelt down and surrendered His will to the Father's in His prayer of consecration in the garden of Gethsemane (Luke 22.41-42)

“And He was withdrawn from them about a stone's throw, and He knelt down and prayed, saying, "Father, if it is Your will, take this cup away from Me; nevertheless not My will, but Yours, be done.””

- This doesn't mean that we must always kneel to pray – the Bible gives many references to prayer where the people adopted various postures – some standing, some sitting, weeping, raised hands, kneeling, walking, bowed down, head in knees, others prostrate. The importance is placed on prayer not posture.
- Toward heaven – Solomon prays his prayer to the God of heaven. He doesn't pray through a priest, he directs his prayer to God himself.

He lifts up his voice in praise and worship and prays and consecrates the Temple for the service of God - He dedicates it for God's use.

A. Solomon's Prayer of Consecration and Dedication of the Temple -

In this prayer of consecration Solomon:

1. Praises God and acknowledges His greatness, faithfulness, covenant and mercy (23)
2. Gives Thanks to God for keeping His word (24)
3. Reminds God of His Word (25).
4. Requests God's grace & favour
 - He asks God to perform what He had promised (25)
 - To have respect for the temple
 - That He Himself would dwell in it (27)
 - That God would hear and answer prayer prayed in the temple (29-30)
5. Suggests cases of why God's people may approach Him
 - In cases of public judgement (31-32)
 - In cases of national calamity (33-37)
 - In cases of personal affliction (38-40)
 - In cases of a stranger's prayer (41-43)
 - In cases of war (44-45)
 - In cases of repentance (46-53)

After Solomon had finished praying the glory of the Lord filled the temple again and this time it was so powerful that the priests could not even enter the temple (2 Chronicles 7.1-2)

B. Lessons from Solomon

He prayed the prayer himself – not one of the priests

Reverent & humble – the great king bowed his knee to the greater God (v54)

“For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,” Ephesians 3.14

His approach

- Praises God and acknowledges His greatness, faithfulness
- Gives Thanks to God for keeping His word - His provision, faithfulness
- Reminds God of His Word
- Asks his requests

6. Elijah and the Prayer Of Faith

James 5.13-18

A. Prayer of Faith -

- We see in the prayer-life of Elijah classic examples of the use of the Prayer of Faith
 - This isn't just the case of believing prayer as we need to believe for every prayer we pray.
 - Prayer of Faith is a particular type of prayer where the person praying has an unwavering faith in God and uses it purposefully in a way which will produce results
 - Faith is operated by words, of course not just any words but the basis of this prayer is the Word of God.

Before we turn to Elijah, let us take a look at what Jesus said about prayer and faith:

“Now in the morning, as He returned to the city, He was hungry. And seeing a fig tree by the road, He came to it and found nothing on it but leaves, and said to it, “Let no fruit grow on you ever again.” Immediately the fig tree withered away. And when the disciples saw it, they marvelled, saying, “How did the fig tree wither away so soon?” So Jesus answered and said to them, “Assuredly, I say to you, if you have faith and do not doubt, you will not only do what was done to the fig tree, but also if you say to this mountain, ‘Be removed and be cast into the sea,’ it will be done. And whatever things you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive.” Matthew 21.18-22

He said a similar thing in Mark's gospel:

“Now the next day, when they had come out from Bethany, He was hungry. And seeing from afar a fig tree having leaves, He went to see if perhaps He would find something on it. When He came to it, He found nothing but leaves, for it was not the season for figs. In response Jesus said to it, “Let no one eat fruit from you ever again.” And His disciples heard it..... Now in the morning, as they passed by, they saw the fig tree dried up from the roots. And Peter, remembering, said to Him, “Rabbi, look! The fig tree which You cursed has withered away.” So Jesus answered and said to them, “Have faith in God. For assuredly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, ‘Be removed and be cast into the sea,’ and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that those things he says will be done, he will have whatever he says. Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will have them.” Mark 11.12-14, 20-24

The keys -

- Jesus released words and spoke to the fig tree – He did not just say whatever He wanted, He only spoke what the Father told Him to say (John 8.26-32)
- He believed the words that He spoke
- He did not doubt that He would see the result he was expecting.

He went on to teach that we too should:

- release words and speak to the mountain (of difficulty, problem) – the word of God, that which God has already revealed.
- not doubt the words that we speak, but believe the words that we speak
- believe that we have received already – giving thanks

Notice that Jesus connected this speaking to the mountain with 'asking in prayer' (Matthew 21.22, Mark 11.24)

B. Elijah's Introduction - 1 Kings 17.1, 14, 21-24

1 Kings 17.1 introduces very abruptly Elijah the Tishbite, a prophet of God.

- Ahab did evil in the sight of the Lord, he did more to provoke God than any other king that had gone before him. Under his authority Jericho was rebuilt, which itself was a direct contravention of God's command (Joshua 6.26)
- And Elijah... this connects the subject of this verse to the thought of the previous one. God spoke through Joshua and God spoke through Elijah

No Rain (v1) - "*As the Lord God of Israel lives, before whom I stand...*".

- Here Elijah states that he is approaching Ahab on behalf of the Lord God. God had sent him to speak to Ahab, as He had sent Moses to Pharaoh.
- 'Before whom I stand' – a reference to prayer, standing before God in prayer. God revealed the things he was to say to Ahab as he prayed. Elijah prayed earnestly that there would be no rain
- '*According to my word*' - as God would it reveal to and through me

Flour Bin and Oil Jar (v14)

- Elijah declares to the widow what the Lord had revealed to him.

Child Revived (v21-24)

- (v24) The words in the mouth of the prophet were the words of the Lord God

C. Elijah's Mount Carmel Challenge - 1 Kings 18.20-38

Mt. Carmel Challenge.

- Elijah challenges the false prophets to a showdown on the mountain. Was he being presumptuous here? Was this a foolhardy thing to do? If he hadn't heard from God, then yes.
- (v36) "*I have done all these things at Your word*" - He did all these things as the Lord had spoken to him.

D. Elijah Expects Rain - 1 Kings 18.41-45

It Rains Again

Elijah sent his servant to look for the rain cloud. He expected rain. He expected an answer to his prayer.

E. Lessons from Elijah

- Bold
 - Elijah made bold statements, He knew His God.
 - Look how many gallons of water were poured on the sacrifice – in the natural an impossibility to light
- A man who believed his own words
 - We will have trouble believing God if we don't believe our own words. He expected God to honour his words, because they were also God's words.
- Short prayers
 - We don't read of any long prayers that Elijah prayed e.g. the prayer he prayed on the mountain (v37)
 - A man is not heard by God because of the many words that he may pray or the complexity of his prayer. God hears the prayer of a sincere heart prayed in faith.
- Peter didn't have the time to pray a long prayer when he was sinking in the sea. His prayer 'Lord, save me' was enough.

James 5.13-18

- A man with a nature like ours.
 - Suffered the same frustrations and temptations as we do. We see a little of his nature in 1 Kings 19. 2-4, 10
- He prayed earnestly
 - We read in 1 Kings 17 that Elijah spoke, the apostle interprets that as prayer.
- God answered his prayer
 - God honoured the word of Elijah

7. The High-Priestly Prayer of Jesus

John 17

This whole chapter is the prayer of Jesus, this is what we really should call the Lord's Prayer.

It is His High-Priestly Intercessory prayer. Jesus is our great High Priest (Hebrews 4.14-16).

It was customary for the High Priest just prior to the Day of Atonement to perform certain acts, which are also evident in the life of Jesus. Jesus was about to offer Himself as the sacrifice for the Atonement of the sins of the world.

The High Priest would perform certain acts:

- Wash himself and put on clean linen garments. (John 13.4-14)
- Offer the sacrifices for the sins of himself and all the people (Mark 14.34-36)
- Pray a prayer of consecration in which he prayed for himself, for the sons of Aaron, and for all the people. (John 17)
- Send the scapegoat into the wilderness (John 19.17-18,30)

One of the key words of Jesus in this prayer is glorify. The definition of this word is 'to impart glory to something, to clothe with splendour, to extol, magnify or hold in honour'

A. The Structure of the Prayer

1. He prays for himself (John 17.1-5).

- Jesus addresses the prayer to His Father, He had a close intimate relationship with His Father. We cannot truly pray in faith unless we know who we are praying to. Eg. We need to know God as provider if we are asking for some needs.
- “Glorify Thy Son” (1) – He asks for God’s grace to accomplish His mission
- “Glorify Thou Me” (5) – He asks that He might return to the place that He shared with the Father.

1. He prays for those that are his.

- He does not pray for the world but for those that the Father had given Him from out of the world (John 17.9).
- Then He prays for those who would come to believe in Him through the words of His disciples (John 17.20).

[a.] That they might be **kept** (John 17.11-16).

- from the world (v11-14)
 - The Father had given them to Him from out of the world – they had been brought out of the world's system, and while with them He kept them. Now that Jesus was departing to be with His Father, He prays that they might be kept from the world.
 - through the name -
 - through the word -
- from the evil one (v15-16)

- 1 John 5.19 says 'the whole world lies *under the sway of the wicked one*' – Jesus didn't pray that we would be taken out of the world but that by the word of God we would be kept out the sway of the evil one.

[b.] That they might be **sanctified** (**John 17.17-19**).

- The truth of God's word is what sanctifies us.
- Sanctify means 'to purify or make holy, to be separate'.
- It is by the Word of God that we are kept separate from the world.

[c.] That they might be **united** (**John 17:11** and **John 17:20-23**).

- through their love and unity that the world may also believe
- that those who believe in Him will have a close relationship with the Father

[d.] That they might be **glorified** (**John 17:24-26**).

- to be with Him in heaven and to behold and share His glory

B. Lessons from the Prayer of Jesus

- It was a prayer after a sermon; when he had spoken from God to them, he turned to speak to God for them. Those we preach, witness, speak to we must pray for.
- It was a prayer after Jesus and his disciples had eaten the passover and the Lord's supper together, and he had given them a suitable exhortation, he closed the solemnity with this prayer.
- It was a family-prayer. Christ's disciples were his family, and He prayed for them and with them. We too should pray for our families
- It was a parting prayer. When we and our friends are parting, it is good to part with prayer.
- It was a prayer that was a preface to his sacrifice, we should pray when we bring our sacrifices, offerings.

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